

# CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

## THE GLOBAL CRISIS, 1921–1941

### Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter Twenty-Seven should enable the student to understand:

1. The new directions of American foreign policy in the 1920s.
2. The effects of the Great Depression on foreign relations.
3. The pattern of Japanese, Italian, and German aggression that eventually led to World War II.
4. The factors that led to the passage of neutrality legislation in the 1930s.
5. The specific sequence of events that brought the United States into the war.

### Main Themes

1. That in the 1920s, the United States tried to increase its role in world affairs, especially economically, while avoiding commitments.
2. How America, in the face of growing world crises in the 1930s, turned increasingly toward isolationism and legislated neutrality.
3. How war in Europe and Asia gradually drew the United States closer and closer to war, until the attack on Pearl Harbor finally sparked American entry into World War II.

### Glossary

1. fascism: A political system that glorifies the nation, minimizes individual rights, and operates through an autocratic central government that tightly controls all economics, political, and social behavior. In the 1930s and 1940s, the term applied to governments under Benito Mussolini in Italy, Adolf Hitler in Germany, and Francisco Franco in Spain.
2. blitzkrieg: A quick, coordinated military attack utilizing armored ground vehicles and intensive air support. The word is German for "lightning war."

### Pertinent Questions

#### THE DIPLOMACY OF THE NEW ERA (730-733 )

1. Why did the United States negotiate separate treaties after World War I?
2. What was accomplished by the Washington Conference and subsequent naval and disarmament conferences?
3. How did American loans and investments work at cross purposes with United States tariff policy? What was the result?
4. What did Hoover do to improve relations with Latin America?
5. What happened to the international efforts at economic stability and disarmament in Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s?
6. How did the Hoover administration deal with Japanese expansionism? How effective was the approach?

#### ISOLATIONISM AND INTERNATIONALISM (734-739 )

7. To what extent did Roosevelt change the U.S. approach to international debt and currency issues?

8. In what ways did U.S. relations with the U.S.S.R. change in the early 1930s?
9. Compare and contrast the Latin American policy of Herbert Hoover with the "Good Neighbor Policy" of Franklin D. Roosevelt. What resulted?
10. What ideas and developments fed isolationist sentiment in the first half of the 1930s? What was Roosevelt's position?
11. Taken as a whole, what were the basic provisions and central purpose of the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937? What European and Asian developments put strains on American neutrality?
12. What aggressive German moves finally started World War II in Europe? How did Britain, France, and the Soviet Union react to the series of aggressive actions?

#### **FROM NEUTRALITY TO INTERVENTION (739-744 )**

13. How did Roosevelt manage to get aid to Great Britain in 1939 and 1940 despite the limitations imposed by the Neutrality Acts? What changes in American public opinion coincided with the worsening situation for France and Britain?
14. What were the two principal positions in the domestic debate over the degree to which the United States should participate in the European war?
15. How did the lend-lease program and the concept of "hemispheric defense" manage to circumvent isolationist arguments about the alleged mistakes of World War I? Why did the U.S. support the Soviet Union in the war?
16. What actions by Hitler and Germany in 1941 led the United States to the brink of war in Europe?
17. What Japanese moves in Asia brought Japan into conflict with the United States?
18. Why could the attack on Pearl Harbor be considered a tactical victory but a political blunder by the Japanese? How have historians treated the attack?

#### **AMERICA IN THE WORLD: THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR, 1931-1941 (736)**

19. What basic motivation lay behind the Japanese desire to conquer China and build an empire? What role did oil play?

#### **PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE: ORSON WELLES AND *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* (738-739 )**

20. What did the public reaction to the *War of the Worlds* broadcast reveal about the power of radio and the anxieties of the American people in 1938?

#### **WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE: THE QUESTION OF PEARL HARBOR (744-745 )**

21. What are the differences between historians who argue that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a result of blunders by the Roosevelt administration and those who postulate deliberate provocation? Which view is more convincing?

## **Identification**

Identify each of the following, and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Henry Cabot Lodge
2. isolation
3. Charles Evans Hughes
4. Kellogg-Briand Pact
5. Dawes Plan
6. Benito Mussolini
7. Nazi Party
8. Aryan people
9. Chiang Kai-shek
10. Reciprocal Trade Act
11. Nye investigation
12. Axis
13. Francisco Franco
14. *Panay* incident
15. Munich and "appeasement"
16. America First Committee
17. Henry A. Wallace
18. Wendell Willkie
19. Atlantic Charter
20. Tripartite Pact
21. Hideki Tojo
22. Jeanette Rankin

## **Document**

Read the section in the text entitled "The Rise of Isolationism," paying careful attention to the discussion of the investigations chaired by Senator Gerald P. Nye (R-N.D.). The following statements were made in May 1935 by Nye and Senator Bennett Champ Clark (D-Mo.), a member of Nye's committee, before a "Keep America Out of War" meeting at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Also on the program was Representative Maury Maverick (D-Tex.), another isolationist. Read the statements and consider the following questions: Was it really the sale of munitions that led America into World War I? Why might a 1935 audience have been especially receptive to charges that bankers were responsible for war? How successful were Nye, Clark, and others in enlisting the "overwhelming body of public sentiment" for neutrality legislation? If Roosevelt had strictly followed the spirit of the neutrality legislation, could American entry into World War II have been avoided?

SENATOR GERALD P. NYE (R.-N.D.)

[The investigations of the Senate Munitions Committee have not been in vain;] truly worthwhile legislation will be forthcoming to meet the frightful challenge.

Out of this year of study has come tremendous conviction that our American welfare requires that great importance be given to the subject of our neutrality when others are at war.

Let us be frank before the next war comes as Wilson was frank after the last war was over. Let us know that it is sales and shipments of munitions and contraband, and the lure of profits in them, that will get us into another war.

If Morgan and the other bankers must get into another war, let them do it by enlisting in the Foreign Legion. That's always open.

SENATOR BENNETT CHAMP CLARK (D-Mo.)

In these resolutions [calling for neutrality legislation] we propose that American citizens who want to profit from other people's war shall not be allowed again to entangle the United States.

We appeal to you to lend your efforts to the creation of an overwhelming body of public sentiment to bring about the firm establishment of that policy. The time for action is due and past due.

From *The New York Times*, May 28, 1935. Copyright © 1935 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

### **Map Exercise**

The Map Exercise in Chapter Twenty-Eight covers this chapter also.

### **Summary**

After World War I, the United States avoided international commitments but not international contact. Relations with Latin America improved, but in Asia and Europe, crises were brewing. The initial American reaction to the aggressive moves of Italy, Germany, and Japan was one of isolationism. Anxious to avoid involvement in another world war, the United States passed a series of Neutrality Acts; but as the Axis aggressors became bolder, Roosevelt eased the nation closer and closer to war. The attack on Pearl Harbor blew away all isolationist remnants, and the nation entered World War II determined and unified.

### **Review Questions**

These questions are to be answered with essays. This will allow you to explore relationships between individuals, events, and attitudes of the period under review.

1. How isolationist was the United States in the 1920s? Was the dual policy of economic penetration and arms limitation an effective approach?
2. Compare and contrast the American reactions to World Wars I and II. Explain the relationship between attitudes toward World War I and the isolationist sentiment and neutrality legislation of the 1930s.

### **Chapter Self Test**

After you have read the chapter in the text and done the exercises in the Study Guide, take the following self test to see if you understand the material you have covered. Answers appear at the end of the Study Guide.

## **MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Circle the letter of the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. The series of treaties signed at the Washington Conference of 1921 to 1922 dealt with three of the following. Which is the *exception*?
  - a. The limitation of land forces.
  - b. The limitation of naval armaments.
  - c. The reaffirmation of the Open Door in China.
  - d. Mutual respect between the four major powers for territorial possessions in the Pacific.
2. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 pledged the signatory nations to:
  - a. join the League of Nations.
  - b. respect the Open Door policy in China.
  - c. renounce war as an instrument of national policy.
  - d. establish a binding regional-security military alliance with one another.
3. How did the Hoover administration respond to the Japanese conquest of Manchuria?
  - a. It supported the Japanese action.
  - b. It imposed economic sanctions on the Japanese.
  - c. It refused to grant diplomatic recognition to the new Japanese territories.
  - d. It ordered the Pacific fleet to stand by off the China coast.
4. In 1933, the United States finally recognized the government of communist Russia, in part because the:
  - a. United States hoped for substantial trade with Russia.
  - b. United States felt it needed a new ally against Hitler.
  - c. Soviet Union completely abandoned support of the Comintern.
  - d. communists had established their legitimacy through free elections.
5. Official recognition of the Soviet regime in Russia by the American government in 1933 resulted in:
  - a. increased understanding and appreciation of the theories of communism by most Americans.
  - b. plans by which the Soviet Union and the United States intended to contain expansion by fascist governments.
  - c. significantly increased sales of American manufactured goods inside the Soviet Union.
  - d. relatively little change in the mutual mistrust which had characterized Soviet-American relations in the past.
6. According to the Dawes Plan of 1924, the United States would:
  - a. provide economic assistance to rebuild the economies of Poland and Russia.
  - b. provide loans to Germany, enabling it to pay reparations to Britain and France.
  - c. reduce tariff rates, allowing trading partners to increase exports and thus earn needed funds to repay debts.
  - d. double its investments in Latin America, providing modern facilities to weaken the appeal of revolutionary groups in that region.

7. With regard to Latin America, Herbert Hoover:
  - a. relied on "dollar diplomacy" as William H. Taft had.
  - b. returned to military intervention as Woodrow Wilson had.
  - c. renounced the Monroe Doctrine and encouraged western European intervention.
  - d. repudiated the Roosevelt corollary and refused to send in U.S. troops when Caribbean nations got into debt problems and political instability.
8. The Good Neighbor policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt applied specifically to:
  - a. Canada.
  - b. Great Britain.
  - c. Latin America.
  - d. the Philippines.
9. The Nye committee reached the conclusion that an important factor leading the United States into war in 1917 was the:
  - a. threat to the balance of power in Europe.
  - b. power vacuum created by the decline of Turkey.
  - c. need to protect American bank loans to the Allies.
  - d. need to protect American overseas colonial possessions.
10. The Neutrality Acts of the 1930s were based on the assumption that the United States could stay out of war by:
  - a. ending the Depression.
  - b. freeing all American colonies.
  - c. staying out of the League of Nations.
  - d. banning arms sales to countries at war.
11. Which of the following place names most readily brings to mind appeasement of the Nazis?
  - a. Dunkirk
  - b. Munich
  - c. Stockholm
  - d. Warsaw
12. World War II in Europe began when Hitler:
  - a. invaded Poland.
  - b. annexed Austria.
  - c. occupied Czechoslovakia.
  - d. signed a nonaggression pact with Stalin.
13. The lend-Lease bill, in 1941, empowered the president to:
  - a. grant government loans to the Allies.
  - b. lend physical goods rather than money to the Allies.
  - c. authorize private American loans to the Allies.
  - d. abrogate the Neutrality Act of 1939 by executive order.

14. Although not yet officially involved in World War II, by the autumn of 1941, the United States was:
  - a. supplying war material to Great Britain.
  - b. supplying war material to the Soviet Union.
  - c. escorting convoys of merchant ships in the Atlantic.
  - d. doing all of the above.
15. Which of the following most seriously threatened the Japanese war effort and forced Japan to choose between conciliating the United States and enlarging the scope of the war?
  - a. the Stimson Doctrine
  - b. the League of Nations
  - c. world reaction to the *Panay* incident
  - d. the freezing of Japanese assets in the United States
16. The quiet lull in World War II in Europe in the winter and early spring of 1940 gave rise to the term:
  - a. "phony war."
  - b. "phantom enemy."
  - c. "peace at any cost."
  - d. "missing military."
17. The American First Committee advocated:
  - a. immediate U.S. entry into the war, to defend France.
  - b. concentrating U.S. power in the Pacific.
  - c. keeping the United States out of the war.
  - d. significantly increasing American assistance to the Allies short of actual entry into the war.
18. In the August 1941 Atlantic Charter, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill:
  - a. decided that as soon as Nazi submarines were controlled in the Atlantic, military forces should make the defeat of Japan in the Pacific the "highest priority."
  - b. announced a set of *de facto* war aims with "common principles" that called for the "final destruction of Nazi tyranny."
  - c. resolved to defeat Germany as quickly as possible because they both regarded the Soviet Union as "a greater threat to world self determination."
  - d. agreed that the British would have principal responsibility for "command and control" in the European theater and that the United States would have it in Asia.
19. The militant Japanese Prime Minister and leader of the so-called war party was General:
  - a. Hirohito.
  - b. Yamamoto.
  - c. Kamikaze.
  - d. Tojo.

20. Militarily, the most significant U.S. loss in the attack on Pearl Harbor was the:
- sinking of eight battleships.
  - sinking or disabling of four aircraft carriers.
  - delay in obtaining a congressional declaration of war because of the demoralizing of the American public.
  - delay in declaring war on Germany because of all the immediate anger focusing on Japan.

### **TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS**

Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements "T" and false statements "F."

1. Rather than being a pure isolationist, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge wanted the United States to exert its influence internationally but in a way that reflected U.S. interests and virtues and avoided obligations to other nations.
2. Even though many people characterized American foreign policy during the 1920s as "isolationism," in fact the United States played a more active role than in world affairs than at almost any other peacetime period.
3. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes was the key figure in resisting efforts to reduce significantly the size of the American naval establishment after World War I.
4. The Dawes Plan of international finance granted France and Britain a moratorium on payment of war debts to the United States as long as Germany remained unable to make timely war-reparation payments to them.
5. American tariff policy in the 1920s was designed to encourage the sort of trade that would allow European nations to acquire foreign exchange credits so that they could pay their war debts to the United States.
6. When Japan invaded northern Manchuria and further into China in 1931–1932, President Hoover cooperated with the League of Nations in imposing economic sanctions against Japanese aggression.
7. Benito Mussolini was the leader of the Spanish Nazi party.
8. The Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act was designed to raise tariffs and protect American industry during the Depression.
9. The improved diplomatic climate resulting from U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933 proved short-lived, and mutual distrust returned by 1934.
10. The provisions of the Neutrality Acts of 1935–1937 were based, to a great extent, on the assumption that the United States should avoid activities that had led the nation into World War I.
11. In the Spanish Civil War, the forces of General Francisco Franco were supported by Hitler and Mussolini.
12. The *Panay* incident involved last-minute diplomatic efforts to keep Italy from making an alliance with Germany.
13. In the 1940 election between Franklin Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, the voters were presented with a clear choice between an advocate of strong but nonmilitary support for Great Britain and an advocate of immediate military intervention.
14. The term "appeasement" referred to the fact that the United States was not willing to join the war against Germany as long as the Soviet Union maintained its nonaggression pact with the Nazi regime.



15. President Roosevelt circumvented the provisions of the Neutrality Acts by trading fifty American destroyers to Britain in exchange for the right to establish bases on British territory in the Western Hemisphere.
16. The America First Committee was lead by several prominent citizens including Charles Lindbergh.
17. Even before the United States officially entered the war in December 1941, German submarines were firing at American vessels, and American destroyers were authorized to shoot "on sight" if they spotted U-boats.
18. In the summer of 1941, Japanese forces invaded French Indochina and threatened the Dutch East Indies.
19. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States had already brought pressure on Japan by first terminating the long-standing commercial treaty and then freezing assets and establishing a complete trade embargo.
20. After the Pearl Harbor attack the U.S. Congress unanimously declared war on Japan, with even Representative Jeanette Rankin, who had opposed World War I, voting for war.